

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat

DECEMBER 1986

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

- Meeting December 5 Mr.G.Ambrose - Study Night
Non-flowering Plants
- Meeting February 6 Selected Films on Natural History
- Excursion December 7 Barkshead-Spargo Creek Area
- Excursion February 8 A Local Lake or Reservoir



Plant study with Dr. Jim Willis, Paddys Range, October 1986.

President : Miss H BURGESS 312210
Secretary : Mr B DOWLING 432425
Treasurer : Mrs F WILLIAMSON 327631
Editors : Mr G BINNS 332282
Mr L FINK 052 861319

Meetings, as specified, are held in the Art
Building of the School of Mines and Industries,
Lydiard Street South, Ballarat, commencing 7:30pm.
EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM
CROCKERS, Cnr. STURT and ARMSTRONG STREETS,
BALLARAT, AT 9.30 am FOR FULL DAY OUTING!
OR AT 1.30 pm FOR HALF DAY.

This is a half-day excursion to the Barkstead, Spargo Creek area, departing from Crockers Corner at 1.30. pm. With daylight saving providing good observation conditions later in the day. Members are invited to bring a picnic tea and return home at a later time.

THE COMING YEAR.

By our constitution, all committee positions become vacant and open for election of the A.G.M. of March. Nominations are required at the February meeting, on the forms available, signed by the nominators and nominees. Members are urged to consider this necessary part of our clubs existence, and to either seek involvement in the clubs affairs or to discuss with others their likely participation as a committee member.

FIELD REPORTS - OCTOBER MEETING.

B. Dowling- Caper White Butterflies in large numbers at Learmonth.

H. Burgess- Male Koala in garden, Moola St.; Black Spotted moths in large numbers; Spotted Pardalote lying on concrete pathway, sunning itself.

G. Bluns - another sighting of Fantailed Cuckoo at Pleasant St. Stn.

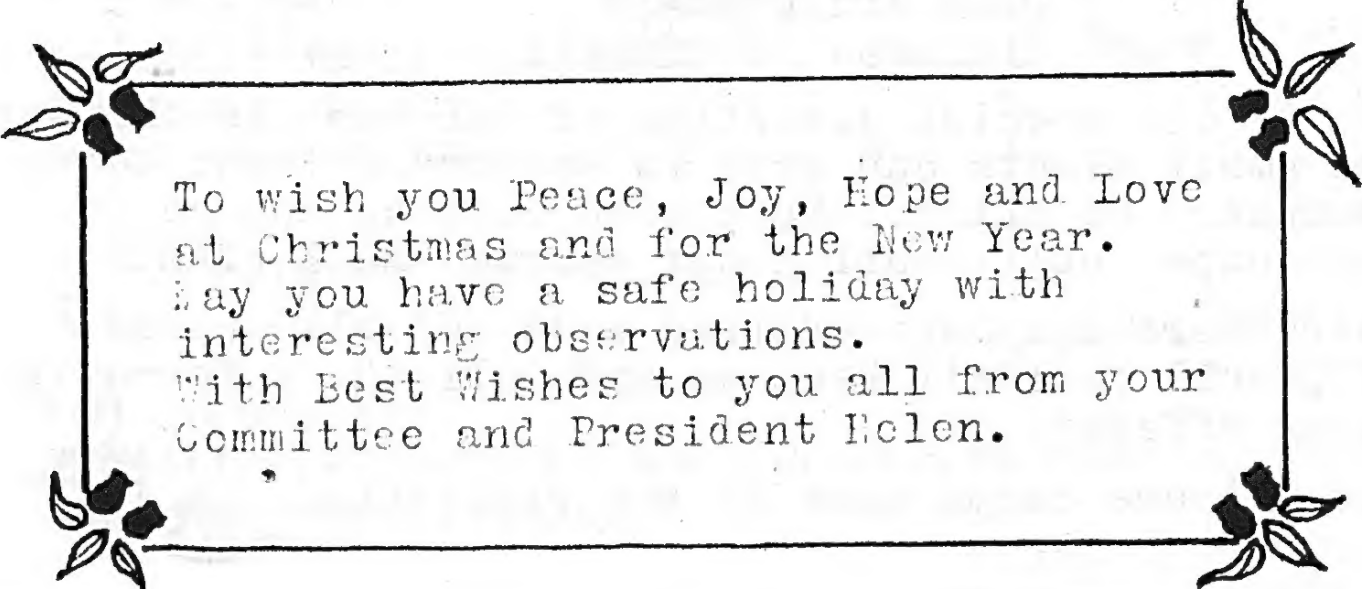
F. Harrap - Eastern Rosella still deciding whether or not to use nesting box.

COMMITTEE MEETING - 28 January 1987 at the Meredith Post Office at 8pm.

AUSTRALIAN BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES STUDY - FLORA OF AUSTRALIA.

The Bureau of Flora and Fauna is preparing a volume Flora of Australia in conjunction with all States and Territories. Volume 48 will cover conifers and ferns, and the author requires information on 'naturalized' conifers in the country ie. an introduced plant reproducing outside of cultivation or plantations - without being tended by humans.

Members have been invited to report introduced conifers growing in the situations outlined above. These could be in areas of native vegetation or in roadsides or paddocks. Information needed is - the location of the plants, a specimen (for confirmation of species) who collected it and when. An adequate specimen would consist of a small branch no more than 25-30 cm long with leaves or needles and terminal buds, and if possible a cone. A brochure is to hand, describing the study. Contact : Dr. R.J. Hnatiuk, G.P.O. Box 1383, Canberra, ACT, 2601.



To wish you Peace, Joy, Hope and Love
at Christmas and for the New Year.
May you have a safe holiday with
interesting observations.
With Best Wishes to you all from your
Committee and President Helen.



I first thought "delphinium" or maybe "hya cinth"...
It was the blue.....

We'd not long left the cars, sixteen men, women and children, all eager to see Enfield Forest in the Spring.

I was stopped in my tracks.

It was the colour and the size of the flowers that caught me by surprise.

Green stems were covered by the palest, softest blue flowers. The unopened flowers were pink.

It was Thelymitra aristata

We saw three varieties of Thelymitra during the afternoon.

The pale blue ... Thelymitra ~~aristata~~

pale pink ... Thelymitra carnea

and blue ones with scattered black specks. T. ~~ixioides~~.

Remember the pale blue speckled bird's egg you held gently as a child, well you're getting close to the delicacy of Thelymitra ~~ixioides~~.

We all knelt down to get a closer view. In fact, we seemed to spend a lot of time during the afternoon on our knees.

Capable leader PAT MURPHY in her cheerful pink wind-cheater then led us to the smallest flowers in Enfield. After all, we'd just seen the largest..... and out came the magnifying glasses, and they were certainly needed.

...In all their perfection...

Smallest sundew

Drosera pygmaea

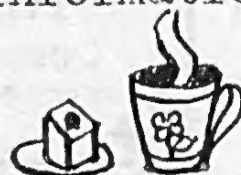
and Cicandja filiformis

(hope the
spelling is O.K.)

One of the special qualities of our bush is that large and small plants can grow in harmony, without being swamped. So often, I have seen exotics change the landscape, obliterating our unique small plants.)

There were many discoveries made and all shared. My pencil couldn't keep up with all the information being offered.

The welcome cuppa came at the right time.



SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS.....

- Two little girls setting off the triggers of the Stylidiums.
- Same two ... seeking Helen out to identify the caterpillar on the end of the stick.
- Two little girls and one bigger (guess who?) collecting seed pods of the eucalyptus for Kelaston Christmas decorations.
- Helen assisting Clare to differentiate between Bossiaea, Dillwynia, Pultenaea and Daviesia "Taste the leaf" said Helen.
- Lady birds.
- Bronze new foliage of Banksia marginata.
- Russet seedpods of Acacia myrtifolia.
- Butterflies abounding Grevillea Bedgoodiana.
- Mother describing the bird orchid to smallest child. "It looks like a baby bird waiting to be fed."
- "Glo-lomp", "glo-lomp" of the frogs in the dam.
- Pat willingly re-tracing her steps many times, in response to a call for identification.
- The misty view from the Beacon.
- Elegant droseras.
- Helichrysum Scorpoides dotting the landscape.
- Leptospermum marinoides with its simple white flowers covering the hillsides.
- Brown Stringybarks and Messmates overhead.
- Purplish beard orchid, Bird orchid, nodding greenhood, Pauciflora orchid, the leaves of the hare orchid.
- Sniffing the scented olearia in company with fifteen other enthusiasts. (slight exaggeration).
- Pimeleas, yellow splashes of goodenia.
- Singing of the birds.

So many lovely discoveries... the rain held off, the companionship was valued. It was great to have Helen on the trail again.

Thanks to Pat for her leadership and to everyone present for a relaxed and enjoyable outing.

Margaret Martin.

"Dew evaporates

And all our world is dewso dear

So fresh, so fleeting."

Issa.

PYCNOGONIDS - David Staples

At our November meeting David Staples was our guest speaker. His subject was Pycnogonids, a little known group of marine creatures which is quite widespread.

David said they are really biological oddities because part of the chain is missing. There are only 3 fossil records. Consequently there are many theories:- One being that it is one branch of what on land is Arachnid. Another belief is that they are a class of their own.

They have^{of} no commercial value, they do not bite and apparently have no impact on the environment.

Pycnogonids are world wide with the largest concentration and the large animals found in the Antarctic. There are 1200 species worldwide some 200 in Victorian waters. They mostly have 4 pairs of legs but some from Antarctica have 5 and even 6 pairs; these oddities are also found in the Carribean.

The largest live in deep water and grow up to 50 centimetres across, the smallest are 2 centimetres. The earliest work on the group was by Professor Flynn but they have been rather a neglected group, better known in New Zealand and Scandinavia. However there are some 2000 papers written on them, although on the ecology of these creatures nothing is known.

Some call them No-body Crabs as there is almost an absence of body. Most have their body organs in their legs. The first reporting of Pycnogonids was in 1881 in Bass Strait.

They are quite colourful, taking on the colours of the hosts they feed on. Hydroids are one of the favoured hosts and there seems to be some connection between them and female Hydroids, particularly the reproductive parts. Some have disruptive colouring, and the most primitive of the group feed on worms.

They reproduce by the female passing eggs to the male in great masses; after hatching they possibly go through about 9 moults.

One Pycnogonid lives in the sand and places its eggs in a sac.

Soon after emergence the young begin feeding on Hydroids. Some of the young eat their way to the inside of the Hydroid, others into Nudibranch and act as parasites. They also use Bi-valve Shellfish and other soft bodied creatures for food.

To travel they catch the tide and go for miles. Many live around the shoreline under rocks and may be found on our Victorian beaches.

L.F.

November Outing - BAMGANIE

A large gathering of members and friends enjoyed one of the most pleasant days we have had this Spring during the outing of Sunday 9th.

The early group left Meredith and went along Shelford Rd. to Deans Rd.- one koala recorded on Shelford Rd. We stopped along the way to look at the roadside plants and the general countryside which is very parklike. We saw some of the heaps from the Bamganie Goldfields and the remains of a chimney from the small settlement that was associated with the gold mining era. Then onto Bamganie Bush, stopping at the burnt area where we saw many orchid leaves (Aciathus) and some birds. From there we went further down the track to the former gravel quarry area for lunch.

There is a list of 62 plants recorded for the day. Among the more interesting ones are *Pteristylus rufa*, *Caladenia pygmyea*, a *Dianella*?, and many others in flower.

After lunch another large group of members arrived and we walked through the creek area. Three more koalas were recorded in this area. A total of four were observed one male and three females all in good health.

The bird list numbered thirty five species, many in full voice in the exhilarating spring sunshine.

The white-eared was the most prevalent of the honeyeaters, three Cuckoo species were calling, and good views of an old and a more recent Wedge Tailed Eagle s' nests were seen.

L.F.

SUMMARY OF THE ROLES OF EUCALYPTS.

Major features of the 12 most common Eucalypts found naturally near Ballarat.

<u>Group :-</u> <i>E. camaldulensis</i> (River Red Gum)	Large tree. Buds on long pedicels. Operculum strongly beaked.
<i>E. ovata</i> (Swamp Gum)	Usually found in poorly drained places. Juvenile leaves oval shaped.
<i>E. rubida</i> (Candlebark)	White upright trunk. Juvenile leaves sessile. Buds almost sessile.
<i>E. viminalis</i> (Ribbon Gum)	Bark peels in long ribbons. Juvenile leaves lanceolate and sessile.
<i>E. yarralensis</i> (Yarra Gum)	Bark rough and persistent. Peduncles slender to 0.5 cm. (Not many of these !)

BOX GROUP :-

<i>E. melliodora</i> (Yellow Box)	Inflorescence has a long peduncle. Buds pedicellate. Disc on fruit descending.
<i>E. aromaphloia</i> (Scent Bark)	Bark has distinct odour when rubbed. Long leaves. Fruit almost sessile.

MYRTLE GROUP :-

<i>E. dives</i> (Broad-leaved m/t)	Adult leaves petiolate, broad, rich in oil. Juvenile leaves sessile, ovate to heart-shaped.
<i>E. radiata</i> (Narrow-leaved m/t)	Adult leaves thin and narrow. Base of juvenile leaves around stem. Buds "rad. - iate" from a central point - hence name.

STRINGYBARK GROUP :-

<i>E. dexteri</i> (Brown S/k)	Buds on long pedicels (club-shaped) Fruit large and round - disc ascending. Adult leaves asymmetrical.
<i>E. macrorhynca</i> (Red Stringy Bark)	Juvenile leaves have short petioles and a slightly toothed edge. Operculum pointed. Fruits have 3 projecting valves. (Hence name.)
<i>E. obliqua</i>	Adult leaves asymmetrical (hence name) Buds club-shaped. Operculum has a short point. Fruit wine glass shape - valves descending (sunken).

B.H.

THIS CONCLUDES THE EUCALYPT STUDY - THANKS TO HARVEY!